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SENATE BILL 3134 By
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HOUSE BILL 3237
By Turner (Ham)

AN ACT to create an economic council on women.

WHEREAS, it is necessary and appropriate for this state to more fully address the economic concerns and needs of women, including, but not limited to, employment policies and practices, educational needs and opportunities, child-care, property rights, health-care, domestic relations, and the impact of federal and state laws; and

WHEREAS, a council is needed to conduct research, hold hearings, develop recommendations and policies, educate the public and engage in other activities for the benefit of women; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. A Tennessee economic council on women, hereinafter referred to as the "economic council," is created. The economic council shall be composed of twenty-one (21) members. Nine (9) members shall be jointly appointed by the speaker of the senate and the speaker of the house of representatives, one (1) such member to be so appointed from each of the nine (9) multi-county development districts created under Tennessee Code Annotated § 13-14-101, *et seq.* Two (2) senators shall be appointed by the speaker of the senate and two (2) representatives shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives. One (1) member shall be appointed by the Tennessee black caucus of state legislators and one member shall be appointed by the legislative women's caucus. One (1) cabinet member shall be

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appointed by the governor. Three (3) members shall be appointed by the governor, one (1) such member to be so appointed from nominations received from each of the following: the board of trustees of the university of Tennessee, the Tennessee board of regents and the Tennessee independent colleges and universities, which nominees shall be academic faculty or staff: (1) from state or private four-year universities or colleges having a graduate program, and (2) with research and teaching experience in the field of economic concerns of women]. The governor shall appoint two (2) members at-large from a slate of six (6) nominees jointly recommended through links, 100 black women, league of women voters of Tennessee, Tennessee women's political caucus, Tennessee lawyers association for women and housing authority tenant associations. The appointing authorities shall ensure that their appointments broadly represent the community in such areas as age, sex, minority groups, economic levels, employment and political affiliation.

The first appointive members shall hold office for staggered terms. Of the nine (9) appointees from the development districts, the speakers shall jointly appoint three (3) for two (2) year terms, three (3) for four (4) year terms, and three (3) for six (6) year terms. Of the three (3) academic appointees of the governor, one (1) academic member shall be appointed for a two (2) year term, one (1) for a four (4) year term, and one (1) for a six (6) year term. One (1) of the members at large appointed by the governor shall serve an initial four (4) year term. The other member at large appointed by the governor shall have an initial six (6) year term. All other appointees shall be for six (6) year terms. All subsequent appointments of members shall be for full six (6) year terms. No appointed member shall be appointed to more than two (2) consecutive six (6) year terms. Vacancies shall be filled by appointment pursuant to the criteria in this section only for the remainder of the unexpired term. Any member initially appointed for a six (6) year term shall not be eligible for reappointment without a two (2) year absence from commission membership. All other members shall be eligible for reappointment for a six (6)

year term. A two (2) year absence from the economic council membership qualifies any member for reappointment following the criteria of this section.

SECTION 2.

(a) The economic council shall meet as necessary to transact business; provided, that meetings shall be held at least quarterly. Special meetings may be called by the chair or by three (3) members of the economic council, upon delivery of written notice to each member of the economic council. All members shall be duly notified of the time and place of any regular or special meeting at least seven (7) days in advance of such meeting. The economic council may conduct meetings which must be open to the public by: (1) telephone conference calls with speaker phones and/or (2) electronic conferencing. The economic council shall elect at the first regular meeting of each calendar year a chair, a vice-chair, and three (3) representatives, one (1) from each of the three (3) grand divisions, who shall comprise the five (5) member executive committee to function between quarterly meetings. The chair or the executive director may call meetings of the executive committee. The executive committee shall carry out the matters delegated to it by the full economic council. The majority of the members of the economic council shall constitute a quorum and the concurrence of a majority of those present and voting in any matter within its duties shall be required for a determination of matters within its jurisdiction.

(b) The economic council shall promulgate bylaws to provide for the election of officers, establishment of committees, meetings and regulations as to procedural matters of the economic council. The economic council shall conduct its meetings using Roberts Rules of Order.

(c) The economic council shall have the authority to hire an executive director who shall serve at the pleasure of the economic council.

(d) The economic council shall address the economic concerns and needs of women in Tennessee, which concerns and needs include, but are not limited to, employment policies and practices, educational needs and opportunities, child-care, property rights, health-care, domestic relations, and the effect of federal and state laws on women. In order to address these concerns and needs of women, the council may conduct research, hold hearings, develop recommendations and policy, educate the public and engage in activities for the benefit of women.

(e) The economic council shall allocate funds for projects and programs for women, subject to the limits of the appropriations by the general assembly and any funds available or received from other sources for such projects or programs. The economic council is authorized to accept funds from the federal government and private sources to implement Section 2 (d).

(f) The economic council may appoint advisory committees and cooperate with the federal and other state governments in programs relating to women.

(g) The economic council shall consult with and advise the governor, the general assembly and the pertinent agencies, departments, boards, commissions and other entities of state and local governments on matters pertaining to women. Furthermore, the economic council may request and shall receive such assistance from the departments of state and local governments as the economic council needs to enable it to properly carry out its powers and duties.

(h) The economic council shall serve as an advocate within government and in the community for women.

(i) The economic council shall promulgate, amend, revise and rescind such rules as are necessary and appropriate to carry out the purposes of this part in accordance with the uniform administrative procedures act, compiled in title 4, chapter 5.

(j) The economic council shall stimulate more effective use of existing resources and services for women and develop programs, opportunities and services which are not otherwise provided with the aim of developing a comprehensive and coordinated system of services for women.

SECTION 3. The economic council shall submit a biennial report to the governor and the general assembly within the first two (2) weeks of any regular annual session occurring in an even-numbered year. Such report shall summarize the economic council's activities, and finding on the economic status of women in the state of Tennessee during the preceding two years. Furthermore, the economic council shall make such recommendations, as the economic council deems appropriate. A copy of said report shall be published and disseminated to the public as well as copies made available in the offices of the economic council for review by the public.

SECTION 4.

(a) The executive director shall be chief administrative officer of the economic council and pursuant to Section 2 (c), shall serve at the pleasure of the economic council. The executive director shall be a full-time employee of the economic council and shall have education as deemed necessary by the economic council. The economic council shall fix the executive director's duties and responsibilities, which are in addition to those specified in this act. The economic council shall evaluate periodically the performance of the executive director. The executive director shall have the authority to conduct the ordinary and necessary business in the name of the economic council in accordance with the provisions of this part or as determined by the economic council.

(b) The executive director shall have the following duties: be available to serve or represent on the state level committees or bodies concerned with the economic well being of the women of Tennessee; supervise the expenditure of funds and be responsible for complying with all applicable provisions of state and federal law in receipt

of and the disbursement of funds; serve as an advocate within the government and in the community for women; serve as the executive officer of the economic council; employ such personnel as may be required to carry out the provisions of this act subject to the authority given to the executive director by the economic council, and provide staff support to the economic council including a person to act as recording secretary at all the economic council meetings pursuant to Section 1 (c). The executive director shall appoint and may remove all such personnel in accordance with the civil service system.

SECTION 5. The conflict of interest provisions set forth in Tennessee Code Annotated, § 12-4-101, shall apply to members of the economic council.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect on September 1, 1998 the public welfare requiring it.